[10th September 1946

APPENDIX IV.

[Vide answer to unstarred question No. 7 asked by Sri P. Virabhadraswami at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on 10th September 1946, page 327 supra.]

Press Communique No. 21 of the Government of Madras, Home Department, dated 4th September 1945.

Some months ago Government accepted a recommendation of the Post-War Reconstruction Committee in favour of the State ownership of public passenger motor transport. This decision has caused considerable speculation among those engaged in the motor transport and allied businesses who wonder how their interests and prospects are affected. The following statement is intended to clarify the position.

Government adhere to their decision in favour of State ownership as the ultimate aim of their policy. At the same time many factors, such as the shortage of vehicles and trained personnel and the possibility of an elected Government which will have a right to make their own decision in a matter of such fundamental importance make it impossible to take any far-reaching steps towards the ultimate objective at this juncture. The immediate objectives of Government are the improvement of the services offered to the public and their co-ordination with other means of transport, particularly the railways.

As regards the first, under G.O. No. 1467, Home, dated 7th May 1945, small bus operators will amalgamate into concerns of such a size that they can afford to maintain proper facilities for maintenance and repair of their vehicles. The small bus owner who had no facilities for looking after his bus properly, or could not afford to do so or to maintain "Reserve" buses has long been an obstacle to the improvement of bus services, and for a considerable time the Government have been placing before him the advantages of, and need for, amalgamation. The unwillingness of the Government of India to release to such small concerns 'controlled' vehicles, which are in short supply and have to be put to the best use, made necessary more active methods than persuasion. The effect of this G.O. is that hereafter permits for new routes or for new services on existing routes will be granted only to operating concerns owning at least twenty buses and having facilities for their repair maintenance and that the permits of small owners will not be renewed after 31st December 1945 unless they have become part of such a concern. Provision is made for the Provincial Motor Transport Controller to act as arbitrator in case of dispute over the terms of amalgamation.

A well-organized road transport system is of a paramount interest to the Provincial Government and the co-ordination of road and mail passenger services is of not less interest to the Central Government of which the railways are now a department. The Central Government propose to prevent wasteful competition between road and rail

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services by forming with existing operators joint road rail companies to run bus services on roads which are parallel to or act as a "feeder" to a railway. The Government of Madras have agreed to the promotion of such companies and will be a partner in them formally taking a share equal to that of the Central Government. Existing operators will not be subject to any pressure to join such companies or to discrimination if they refuse but it is hoped that the manifest advantages will be sufficient persuasion. Such a company would be protected from competition, to the extent that if all the present road operators joined it and so it held a de facto monopoly. New permits would not be given to any new operator on the route in question. On routes operated by both a joint road rail company and private operators Government would normally offer any additional permits to the road rail company.

TAMIL NADU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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